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ABSTRACT

A detailed description is presented of four beginning teacher induction programs with focus on the areas of program intentions, critical program features, and implementation proceses. The four districts from which each program came are described but not identified. Checklists for the responsibilities of beginning teachers, teacher consultants, building principals, teacher educators, and other appointed participants are presented for each of the programs. The four programs were implemented with high adherence to the state mandates for beginning teacher programs. Directors and other district level administrators were positive and knowledgable about the programs, as were most educators involved in tHe programs. There were concerns about the ability of the programs to "screen" the incoming teachers. The authors conclude that the intent of reforms directed at first year teachers needs to be further examined to ensure that program goals are being met. (CB)

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STATE AND SCHOOL DISTRICT INTENTIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW TEACHER PROGRAMS

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STATE AND SCHOOL DISTRICT INTENTIONS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW TEACHER PROGRAMS

Teaching, as a profession, is in the midst of a dramatic reform movement. The impetus for this reform is drawn out of widespread public discontent over the quality of teachers in the nation's schools. Sweeping changes are being made in the ways in which teachers are educated, evaluated, and certified through policy initiatives in various states around the country.

Beginning teachers have been an early target of these policy-mandated reform efforts. This singling out of beginning teachers for attention may be the result of research over the past two decades that has shown the first year of teaching to be a critical and often difficult transition point in teacher development. Beginning teachers, abandoned by their preservice programs and considered "peers" to all other teachers by their employers, have traditionally been left to their own devices to endure the first few years of teaching. Research that assumes a continuous view of teacher development from preservice to induction to inservice suggests that the transition from preservice to induction may be a fruitful point of systematic attention to promote professional growth. A more devious explanation for why the reform movement has concentrated on the beginning teacher is that they represent the most vulnerable group in the profession. Preservice students in teacher education programs, though certainly not immune to state policy, do have some protection through the structure of higher education in the state system. Inservice teachers through professional organizations or local unions represent a formidable and politically astute group. The beginning teacher from this vantage point is seen as a useful leverage point for infusing change into the system.

The goals of these policy mandates are pretty much the same whatever motivation or strategy one assumes in explaining the focus on the beginning teacher. Programs are being designed that will lead to a higher quality of teaching in schools. The distinction between possible motivations for such programs is made here because it underpins one of the recurring and almost paradoxical themes running through programs for beginning teachers: the tension between screening the profession through assessment and assisting new teachers through a difficult and critical period of professional growth.

Through this paper we will report on one part of a large scale, policy-into-practice study of beginning teacher programs in two states conducted by the Research in Teacher Education (RITE) program of the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at The University of Texas at Austin. The purpose of this research was to describe how induction programs affect the transition from student of teaching to teacher (Griffin, Barnes, Defino, Edwards, Hoffman, Hukill, & O'Neal, 1983). In this paper we will present a detailed description of the beginning teacher programs in two districts in each of the two states studied. This description focuses on such areas as program intentions, critical program features, and implementation processes.

Background

As of fall 1983, there were 15 states actively involved in programming for the beginning teacher (Defino & Hoffman, 1984). Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, and South Carolina had mandated induction programs in place and operational for the 1983-84 academic year. Arizona, Oregon, and North Carolina were piloting programs during this same period. The remaining nine states were at varying stages of the planning process. A brief overview of

the characteristics and features of the four operational programs reveals a great deal about the nature of beginning teacher programs as they are currently conceived.

The development of programs for beginning teachers was spurred by legislative activity in three of the four states. In the case of Georgia, the impetus came in response to a directive from the state superintendent in 1982. In all cases, the direction is clearly "top-down" through the decision making structure in the state educational system. Three of the four states have articulated program goals or intents in terms of insuring that certificates are granted only to those who have demonstrated competencies in teaching. Florida is the only one of the four that has targeted increased student achievement as a primary goal for its beginning teacher program.

In all four states, provisions are made for more than one person to work with and/or assess the beginning teachers served by the induction programs. Programs in South Carolina and Georgia require three observers, or "data collectors" in the latter case, to watch the classroom teaching of beginning teachers. In Oklahoma and Florida three team members are designated to both observe and assist the first-year teacher. In all four states at least one team member is an experienced teacher and a second is a building level administrator--most often the principal. Training for the team members is mandated in three of the four states. This training tends to focus on the necessary skills for assessing teaching competencies. In all four state programs team members are required to observe the beginning teachers. The frequency of formal observations range from a lower limit of one in South Carolina (a second observation is required only if the initial

performance is unsatisfactory), to a minimum of three by each of the three team members in Oklahoma and Florida. All four states have relatively broad performance areas covered in their assessment process. Generally, this includes such skill areas as teacher planning and preparation, classroom management, interpersonal skills, and the techniques of "direct instruction." Three of the four states require that a single observation instrument or set of instruments developed by the state be used to assess the classroom performance of all first-year teachers in their induction programs. Florida, the fourth state, suggests the use of the state-developed system, but provides that districts can develop their own procedures if stringent criteria for reliability and validity are met. In general, the competency areas identified and teaching behaviors targeted on these assessment instruments are at least consistent with, if not drawn directly from, the "process-product" teacher effectiveness research literature.

To some degree all four states have addressed the issue of providing technical assistance or support to the beginning teacher. In all cases there are provisions for communicating feedback to the beginning teacher based on the observations made. Most of these programs discuss the need for staff development or inservice training for the beginning teacher based on the weaknesses identified through observation. It appears that the nature and magnitude of the assistance is pretty much left up to the individual school district to determine and deliver.

Certification in each of the states is contingent upon successful completion of the induction program. Two states provide for a possible second year in the program. Decisions regarding state certification are independent of the decision of the district for continued employment.

In other words, it is possible for a teacher to successfully complete the induction program and be recommended for certification but not retained as a teacher in the district the following year.

This comparison of the general features of these four operational programs suggests that there are many similarities in the areas of intent and process. Demonstrated skill in teaching under classroom conditions has become a necessary prerequisite to state certification. These induction programs ultimately carry the burden of screening the profession for quality at the point of entry and performance in the classroom is viewed as the bottom line. Provisions for fairness/objectivity and support are evident in varying degrees across the programs but in all cases these concerns are secondary to the screening function. The intent of support provisions when they are included is sometimes clouded between a concern for the individual teacher's professional growth and the need to establish a strong defensible data base to support a recommendation to not certify.

Method

Sample

The identification of programs included in this study was the result of an exhaustive review process. First, a national survey of state activity in programs for beginning teacher was conducted (c.f., Defino & Hoffman, 1984). Through this survey, the four states with operational teacher induction programs discussed earlier were identified. Resource limitations coupled with a desire to develop a rich qualitative data base for the study necessitated a focus on just two of these four states. The final choice of the two states included in our sample was based in part on a consideration of maximum geographical spread and in part on an informal survey of teacher educators designed to identify "promising" programs in the country. Two

districts within each state were then identified based on nominations for excellence in educational programming made by leaders in the state educational system and selected university-based teacher educators. The rationale for this sampling strategy was tied to the goal of studying the effects of induction programs under optimal conditions.

Procedures

All documents describing the beginning teacher programs in each state and district were solicited and read. Using procedures similar to those outlined by Huling and Hall (1983) and Heck, Stiegelbauer, Hall and Loucks (1981) to establish innovation configurations, these documents were analyzed to identify "critical" components in each of the district programs. The "critical" components are those program features that must be in place for the developer of the program to acknowledge implementation. This process of document analysis yielded four district-level "checklists" of critical program features.

In addition to this document review, three separate interviews were conducted with each of the individuals responsible for directing the programs in the districts. Briefly, the first interview (September) focused on the intents and organization of the program; the second interview (February) served to validate the "critical" components of the program; and the third interview (May) addressed program effects.

Findings

The state mandates for the beginning teacher programs will be described in general terms as a framework for reporting the findings at the district level. For each district, we will describe the intents and organizational characteristics of the program from the perspective of the district-level director. This will be followed by a presentation of the checklist of

critical features for the beginning teacher program derived from the document review and validated by the district-level director in the second interview. These checklists of essential features are organized around "roles" within the program (e.g., peer teachers, principals, et al.) and required behaviors or responsibilities (e.g., observe beginning teachers three times). Finally, we will report on the effects of the program as perceived and communicated by the district level director at the end of the school year.

State #1

The induction program in State #1 is mandated by one component of a more comprehensive House Bill passed in 1980. This component requires teachers who graduate after January 31, 1982 to participate in an induction program during their initial year of teaching in order to qualify for a state teaching certificate. The declared intent of the legislation is to establish qualifications of teachers to insure that the education of the children will be provided by teachers of demonstrated ability. A local committee of three, including an experienced teacher, an administrator, and another educator, is assigned to provide assistance to the new teacher and to determine whether the teacher will be recommended for certification. At the end of the first year the teacher is recommended by this committee for certification or continuation for a second year. When a second year is required an individual staff development plan is provided. At the end of the second year the teacher is recommended for either certification or noncertification.

In this state, the department of education has developed a standard plan of implementation that is used statewide including time lines and reporting forms. The district is responsible for establishing an

assistance/assessment committee to work with each new teacher. The committee must include an experienced teacher, a building level administrator and another educator from an institution of higher education. This committee has the responsibility to observe the new teacher in the classroom and to meet with the new teacher to offer assistance. An observation instrument focusing on four "categories" (human relations, teaching and assessment, classroom management, and professionalism) is used. This committee makes the recommendation regarding certification of the new teacher.

District A

School District A is located in the central part of the state, in a large urban area which also houses the state capitol. The student population is diverse in ethnicity and socioeconomic background. Additionally, the district has acquired a reputation among state officials for having a strong educational program.

The RITE study was conducted during the second year of statewide implementation of the induction program, and District A had participated in a pilot version two years before. The district administrator overseeing the program had participated in its development at the invitation of state officials, and had taken responsibility for district implementation during both the pilot and initial years.

In the first interview held with RITE staff, the district administrator described the program as a process, or a series of steps which had to be observed if the beginning teacher were ultimately to receive a certificate. Two key purposes were believed to undergird the program: "to provide direct assistance to the first-year teacher, on the one hand, but also to provide a screening process, on the other hand...The end result is that you have

better first-year teachers." Thus, the program was believed to be a mechanism designed to provide "continual feedback to the first-year teacher." The director perceived her role responsibilities as a series of 'checks and balances,' so to speak, by "making sure" that certain mechanical aspects of the program had been executed, and by serving as "the trouble shooter when committees have problems with any one of the three members of the committee."

In the second interview, the program director reaffirmed her belief that a great deal of time needed to be spent "fighting brush fires." Additionally, the administrator responded to several lists of role responsibilities developed by the RITE staff when reviewing literature about the program. A checklist of roles and responsibilities was developed based on this interaction (Figure 1). Some responsibilities for beginning teachers were added by the program administrator to the original list we had developed, such as being responsive to the feedback provided by the committee and making time to meet with the teacher consultant. In several other instances, the language of original list items was changed to reflect the notion that the committee was to function together on tasks, and that no one particular individual on the team was to function apart from the others in reaching certain decisions. The director also indicated that some responsibilities were required only by the district, and were not actually a part of the state mandate.

The final interview held with this individual was unusual due to the fact that she had left the district before the end of the school year to pursue employment in the private sector. This move may have provided a different perspective from which the induction program subsequently was viewed. Regardless, the former program director felt that the screening

State #1, District A Level Checklist

Beginning (EY) Teacher

a. meets with consultant an average of two hrs. per week

b. is observed at least three times by each of three committee members

c. receives formal observation feedback twice during the year (second time must be after April 10)

d. receives advisement for performance improvement during two committee meetings (second -- after April 10)
   -- includes staff development activities to attend, helpful hints from committee, and the like

e. receives recommendation for certification/continuance in EYA program/noncertification (last option possible only after second year in EYA program)

f. participates in all formal EYAC meetings

g. signs off on consultant worksheet record

h. carries out committee recommendations, including staff development plan and activities

Teacher Consultant

a. meets with EY teacher an average of two hrs. per week before/after school or during planning time; some time must be spent in observing EYT; may also be spent consulting 1:1 with EYT, in EYAC meeting, or may have EYT observe him or her)

b. records meetings on the teacher consultant worksheet; signs off at the end of the year

c. formally observes EYT three times in the year, completing an observation instrument each time

d. participates in all formal EYAC meetings
   -- helps select chair of committee
   -- helps determine staff development plan and assists in staff development advisement
   -- helps determine what will be used as "meaningful parental input"
   -- participates in voting decision to recommend EYT (and signs Form 003) for certification/licensure/noncertification.

e. is provided with six hours of inservice training to receive EY program guidelines

Figure 1.

f. [Optional] obtains ten hours of inservice training to gain consulting skills

School Administrators (BLA's)

a. must select a teacher consultant for each EYT within ten days' of teacher's employment
   -- if there is no union/bargaining agent which will submit names of nominees, principal must have teachers hold an election to get three nominees from which he chooses a teacher consultant based upon a rank ordering of seven selection criteria

b. ensures availability of time to consultant and EYT for the two hrs. per week to be used in consultation, including arranging release time when needed
   -- variation: when three or more EYT's are in one building, the principal can arrange for a substitute to come in (on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays only)

c. may only serve on one committee

d. calls the first EYAC meeting of the year within 30 days of EYT's employment

e. provides class coverage to EYT and Teacher Consultant to attend EYAC meetings

f. makes three formal observations of the EYT, completing an observation instrument each time

g. participates in three formal meetings of EYAC

h. provides input on staff development plan

i. helps select committee chair in the first EYAC meeting

j. helps determine what will be used as "meaningful parental input"

k. makes sure committee has served the EYT for 120 days minimum

l. participates in voting decision to recommend for certification/ second try/non-certification

m. signs off on Form 003 (recommendation for certification, licensure, noncertification)

Higher/Other Educators

a. makes three formal observations of the EYT, completing an observation instrument each time

b. participates in three formal meetings of the EYAC

c. helps select committee chair in the first EYAC meeting

Figure 1. (cont.)

d. helps determine what will be used as "meaningful parental input"

e. signs off on Form 003 (recommendation for certification, licensure, noncertification)

f. helps make staff development recommendations for the EYT

Committee Chair (may be any one of the three)

a. is responsible for seeing that regulations are followed by the committee, incl.

(1) completes and signs Committee Form 002 within one week of first committee meeting

(2) establishes a communication system among all Committee members

(3) establishes a schedule for Committee activities

(4) provides all Committee members and the entry-year teacher with the observation instrument for review

(5) discusses how to obtain "meaningful parental input"

(6) follows prescribed sequence: Formal Mtg. I, Obs. I, Obs. II, Formal Mtg. 2, Obs. III, Formal Mtg. III

(7) formal mtg. III must be held after April 10th

(8) presents all copies of completed Form 003 to Superintendent for his/her signature

District Superintendent

a. orders sufficient EYA Program packets by August

b. identifies ETY's in the district

c. identifies the teacher educator for each Committee based upon recommendations received from the teacher education institution coordinator(s)

d. distributes materials to the committees

e. provides copy of Form 003 (rec. for cert./continuance/noncert.) to higher education institution coordinator

f. provides copy of Form 003 to EYT

g. sends Form 003 to Certification Section of State Department of Education

Figure 1. (cont.)

function of the program had not been served as well as it might have (in large part because of her departure from the district), while the support and feedback components apparently were executed successfully. Virtually all the first-year teachers were recommended for certification. The former director indicated concern for future implementation, in that her replacement appeared to have minimal knowledge of the program's structure or requirements ("She doesn't know what she doesn't know!"). In response to this concern, the former director indicated that the checklist generated through the second interview with the RITE staff was used to teach the new administrator about the induction program. The now-outsider expressed a desire to make some changes in the induction program, particularly the elimination of university representatives from the committees. Nonetheless, the director felt that the most positive consequence of the program was that it did "a good job" of preparing first-year teachers, especially with regard to classroom management. Negative consequences were thought to occur only in possible situations where the team "didn't work together and service the new teacher in the way that it's needed."

District B

School District B is located 45 miles from District A, but in a suburban setting that includes one of the state's major universities. District B's student population is less diverse than that of District A. It too had acquired a reputation for academic excellence among state officials.

In the first interview held with the RITE staff, the District B administrator responsible for the induction program perceived it--and the legislation and regulations governing it--as a "precise," "thought-through" effort designed to: "improve the quality of teachers in (State #1);" "speed up the process of becoming a more mature teacher;" and, facilitate the

transition into teaching. After getting past an initial "pretty negative" reaction, "I've seen a lot of change in attitudes from the administrators... statewide, it's really, it's just been excellent." The director described her own role in terms of checking and/or monitoring ("taking care of all the paperwork," "making sure that people understand the regulations"), and serving as a central information source and staff development resource ("doing the inservice for them...And then, also, being a resource.").

The second interview was spent, in part, reviewing the configurations of role responsibilities previously generated by the RITE staff. The program director confirmed all of these role responsibilities. She also suggested some language modifications, for example: removing the word "all" from items pertaining to the advisement of first-year teachers on classroom management; and, clarifying behaviors/decision-making as reflective of the committee's action, rather than any one individual's. Interestingly, the program director experienced confusion or was unclear about some of the forms specified by name in RITE's checklist (all taken directly from copies of forms); yet she was able to proceed with the interview by relying upon the functions served by various forms. Based on this interview a program checklist was devised (Figure 2).

The program director reaffirmed her beliefs and perceptions regarding the induction program in the final interview. The notion that the program was designed to create or include "quality teachers to produce quality education" was reiterated. The director felt that the program's strength was in its provision for formally establishing "a support system" for first-year teachers, whereas its weak point also was found to be in the committees--in the specific instance of a committee "that's not an effective

State #1, District B Level Checklist

Beginning Teacher

a. every teacher with 0 years experience as a classroom teacher shall serve under a teacher consultant for a minimum of one school year, in no case for less than 120 days

b. will be assigned a teacher consultant within ten teaching days after entering the classroom

c. signs the Teacher Consultant Reporting Form - following the formal meetings (3)

d. may request reasons for committee recommendations other than for certification

Teacher Consultant

a. holds standard certificate and a minimum of two years of classroom teaching experience as a certified teacher

b. serves as consultant no more than two consecutive years, and for only one entry-year teacher at a time

c. is selected by the principal from a pool of elected candidates

d. provides guidance and assistance to beginning teacher a minimum of 72 hours per year in observation and consultation, an average of two hours per week

e. assists in matters concerning classroom management and inservice training for that [beginning] teacher as a member of the entry-year assistance committee

f. carries out these recommended duties:

(1) Acquaints beginning teacher with building procedures, duties, identification and location of materials, supplies, and texts, and special services available.

(2) Introduces specialists and assists with all referrals.

(3) Assists with and evaluates short term and long term goals, objectives, and lesson plans.

(4) Assists with and evaluates beginning teacher during parent conferences and pupil evaluation.

(5) Provides classroom management techniques appropriate to school philosophy and level.

Figure 2.

(6) Provides access to teacher-made materials and ideas already tried.

(7) Assists with pupil diagnosis, placement, and materials.

(8) Models appropriate team teaching behavior, professionalism, and enthusiasm.

g. fills out and signs the Teacher Consultant Reporting Form and returns to the Committee Chair. (Observation Instrument)

h. uses the Teacher Consultant Checklist to structure his/her activities in the role (see attached Appendix A)

i. observes EYT a minimum of three times per year

j. meets with EYT on Committee a minimum of three times per year

k. makes recommendations to the Board as a member of EYA committee regarding certification/second year in entry program/ non-certification (last option may be used only after two entry years have been completed)

l. provides entry-year teacher with a list of reasons for recommendations other than for certification, upon request by the entry-year teacher

m. when certification is recommended, will also recommend a staff development program to strengthen teaching skills in any area identified by the committee

n. fills out EYA Committee Checksheet (EY Teacher Recommendation)

Building Principal--whether on the EYAC or not

a. selects teacher consultant from a list submitted by the bargaining unit, where one exits, or from a list of names elected by the teachers in the building

b. makes the selection within 10 days after the beginning teacher enters the classroom

c. selects according to seven rank-ordered criteria

Principal, Assistant Principal, or other local board-designated administrator ("BLA's")

a. meets with entry-year teacher as often as local board requires

(1) meets with EYT on Committee a minimum of three times per year

Figure 2. (cont.)

b. assists in matters concerning classroom management and inservice training for that [beginning] teacher

c. observes EYT a minimum of three times per year

d. provides for meaningful parental input as one criterion in evaluating the entry-year teacher's performance

e. makes recommendations to the SDE for certification/second year entry program/noncertification (last option may be used only with second-year entry program participants)

f. when the recommendation is other than for certification, will provide entry-year teacher with a list of reasons upon request by the EYT

g. when certification is recommended, will also recommend a staff development program to strengthen teaching skills in any area identified by the committee

h. fills out EYA Committee Checklist

i. may schedule first EYA Committee meeting

Teacher Educator--if not in a college/school of education of an institution of higher learning

a. meets with entry-year teacher as often as local board requires

(1) meets with EYT on Committee a minimum of three times per year

b. assists in matters concerning classroom management and inservice training for the [beginning] teacher

c. observes EYT a minimum of three times per year

d. provides for meaningful parental input as one criterion in evaluating the entry-year teacher's performance

e. makes recommendations to the SDE for certification/second year entry program/noncertification (last option may be used only with second-year entry program participants)

f. when the recommendation is other than for certification, will provide entry-year teacher with a list of reasons upon request by the EYT

g. when certification is recommended, will recommend a staff development program to strengthen teaching skills in any area identified by the committee

Figure 2. (cont.)

h. fills out EYA Committee Checksheet (Recommendation)

Committee Chair

a. chairs committee

b. follows established EYA Program Regulations, including prescribed sequence: Formal Meeting I, Independent Observation I, Independent Observation II, Formal Meeting II, Independent Observation III, Formal Meeting III (must be after April 10)

c. completes EYA Committee Form 002 within one week following Formal Meeting I and returns to SDE

d. establishes a communication system among EYA committee members during Formal Meeting I

e. establishes a schedule during Formal Meeting I for EYA committee members' activities

f. provides committee members and EYT with the observation instrument for review during Formal Meeting I; EYT receives one copy, all others receive two sets of NCR (self-carbon) copies of instrument

g. discusses how to obtain meaningful parental input

h. determines with Committee what will be observed in Observation I

i. completes Form 003 based on majority vote, and presents to Superintendent for signature

j. makes sure that Formal Meeting II with EYT includes these steps:

(1) review progress

(2) formulate recommendation

(3) go over observation instrument with EYT

(4) determine observation for next visit

k. makes sure Format Meeting III with EYT includes these steps:

(1) make recommendation concerning certification

(2) recommend staff development program

(3) if second year or recommending non-certification, make list of reasons

Figure 2. (cont.)

committee." Concern was expressed with regard to the autonomy of local campuses, particularly in terms of the kinds of staff development made accessible by building principals to first-year teachers: "...you don't have as much control over the information that the entry-year teacher is getting...that maybe they're not going to get (inservice programs) at the building level based on what the priorities of the principal are." Yet, in the broad perspective, the director noted, "when we have an entry-year teacher in our district I feel real good about it, because I know that principal knows that he (sic) is going to work with that person extra time, you know, for a year..." It is perhaps ironic that the director was aware that, due to a reduction in funds, her position probably would be cut for the following school year--leading to possible administrative reassignment at a local campus. Provisions from program leadership for the upcoming year were unclear.

State #2

The induction program in State #2 is mandated through a Senate Bill approved in 1981 which provided for a beginning teacher program. The purpose of this program is to: (a) increase student learning by providing a set of supervised support services for teachers in the first year(s) of teaching in the state to assist them in their continuing professional development, and (b) meet the requirements of the state statute and administrative code. Successful completion of the program is required for the superintendent or chief administrator to recommend the teacher for a full certificate. A State Board Rule in State #2 effective July 1, 1982 circumscribes the Beginning Teacher Program, defining it as a "formal" program of at least one year. Each school district was required to submit a plan for approval by May 1, 1982. The state guidelines specify the broad

components to be included but each school district is responsible for developing its own specific plan and submitting that plan to the state board for approval. This plan must include provision for supervised support services for the continuing development and demonstration of specified competencies by the new teacher. The beginning teacher support staff must include a peer teacher, a building level administrator and one other professional educator. A "summative" evaluation plan must be provided which includes observation instruments and evaluation procedures to demonstrate successful performance of the minimum essential competencies. At least two "summative" evaluations are required, one within 90 working days of the beginning of the employment period in order to provide assistance where observations suggest it is needed. At least three "formative" conferences are required, each conference based on at least one observation by a support staff member, using a set of common criteria.

The program provides the beginning teachers with an opportunity to demonstrate the minimum essential competencies specified in state statues and state board rule. Twenty-four "generic" competencies are identified as "essential," and it is the responsibility of the support committee assigned to the new teacher to assure that the teacher recommended for certification has demonstrated these competencies. Instruments including indicators and frequencies are used by the committee in observing the new teacher and as objective verification. The state has developed and validated an observation instrument that can be used for this purpose. The instrument targets teaching behaviors in six domains: (1) planning, (2) management of student conduct, (3) instructional organization and development, (4) presentation of subject matter, (5) communication, verbal and non-verbal, and (6) evaluation. Individual districts are free to propose an

alternative to the state-developed instrument provided they can demonstrate stringent reliability characteristics and meet criteria for validity around the essential competency areas.

District A

School districts within the educational system of State #2 overlap, in terms of geographical boundaries, with the county structure in the state. Each district, therefore, tends to serve a relatively large and diverse area. School District A is located in the western part of the state. The area is primarily suburban although some rural areas are included. The students served by the district are drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds, both in terms of ethnicity and family income levels. The district is well-regarded within the state for the quality of its educational program.

The year of the RITE study was the second year for the induction program in the district. The individual responsible for directing the program had served in this role since its inception. In our initial interview, the director of the beginning teacher program in this district described the program in terms of a state mandate that has two purposes: (1) "to provide a support system for beginning teachers," and (2) "to verify that these teachers are competent or possess the 24 generic competencies that have been identified by the state." The state dictates certain requirements and "...basically we try to implement the program based on the requirements that have been set forth for us."

The program director described her responsibilities in terms of "coordinating and implementing and providing training for the beginning teacher program." This includes training of support team members and providing orientation to the beginning teacher for the induction program.

The orientation is designed to help "...them understand what the Beginning Teacher Program entails, how it will affect them, and what's required and so forth." In addition to the basic requirement mandated by the state the program director explained that in their district, they had prepared staff development training packages in each of the six domains associated with the observation instrument used for assessment. The program director also revealed that she had participated in extensive training for the program, in particular in training with the observation instrument.

The findings from our second interview which covered the features of the induction program in the district are presented in Figure 3.
As described earlier, a list of responsibilities was developed from a review of published documents describing the program. Through the interview process the program director verified these responsibilities. In the interview, the director added six "recommended" behaviors to the list of the Beginning Teacher. These additions are noted in Figure 3. No others were added and the rest of the responsibilities were validated from the program directors' perspective as being required in the program.

There were approximately 200 first-year teachers participating in the program in District A the year of this study. In the fall interview the director stated the expectation that most of the beginning teachers would have no difficulty with the program. She reported that no beginning teacher had ever failed to pass the program yet. In the final interview she expressed the view again that no one would fail the program.

In commenting on the program at the end of the year, the director expressed the view that its greatest strength rests in the support system created for the beginning teacher. In addition to the benefits for the

State #2, District A Level Checklist

1. Beginning Teacher

   a. Participates in meetings scheduled with Beginning Teacher Support Staff which shall consist of a peer teacher, a building-level administrator, and at least one other professional educator.

   b. Participates in development of his/her Professional Development Plan.

   c. Participates in recommended group and individualized staff development activities.

   d. Demonstrates the possession of minimum essential competencies.

   e. Requests revision of Professional Development Plan if needed.

   f. Completes activities specified in Professional Development Plan according to scheduled deadlines.

   g.* Understands the evaluation tools that are used.

   h.* Provides correct information during pre-observation conference regarding what will be taught.

   i.* Initiates requests for assistance.

   j.* Lets observer(s) know if observation should be rescheduled, and why.

   k.* Lets someone know whether he or she perceives a problem that some members of the team failed to notice.

2. Peer Teacher

   a. Provides support, counseling, feedback, and/or instruction to the beginning teacher.

   b. Participates in all formal meetings scheduled by the Beginning Teacher Support Staff.

   c. Participates in the development and revision (if needed) of the beginning teacher's Professional Development Plan.

   d. Participates in the Beginning Teacher Support Staff Training activities as specified in the Professional Development Plan.

   e. Assists the Beginning Teacher in preparing lesson plans as specified in the Professional Development Plan, if needed.

*added by program director during interview as "recommended"

Figure 3.

f. Makes informal and formal observations in the Beginning Teacher's classroom for the purpose of diagnosing strengths and weaknesses and providing feedback and assistance to the Beginning Teacher based on the diagnosis.

g. Provides information for the formative stages of the evaluation process.

h. Participates in training sessions devoted to the state's Performance Measurement System.

3. Building-level Administrator

a. Organizes and selects members of the Beginning Teacher Support Team.

b. Serves as chairperson of the Beginning Teacher Support Team.

c. Schedules meeting of Beginning Teacher Support Team.

d. Participates in the development of the Beginning Teacher's Professional Development Plan.

e. Coordinates revision of the Professional Development Plan if requested by the Beginning Teacher or is he/she or any other member of the Beginning Teacher Support Staff believes that revision is necessary.

f. Makes a minimum of three formal observations annually in each Beginning Teacher's classroom.

g. Assesses each Beginning Teacher for possession of the state's Twenty-four (24) Generic Competencies.

h. Provides released time to the Beginning Teacher and the Peer Teacher when scheduled activities in the Professional Development Plan require it.

i. Maintains the Beginning Teacher Portfolio.

j. Completes all summative evaluations of the Beginning Teacher assessment. (principal only)

k. Verifies that the Beginning Teacher has satisfactorily demonstrated teaching competence based on the state's Twenty-four (24) Generic Competencies and is eligible to receive a state Regular Teaching Certificate. (principal only)

l. Sends the completed Beginning Teacher Portfolio to the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel.

Figure 3. (cont.)

m. Oversees completion of the Professional Development Plan.

n. Participates in training sessions devoted to the state's Performance Measurement System

4. Other Professional Educator(s)

a. Participates in formal meetings scheduled by the Beginning Teacher Support Staff as specified in the Professional Development Plan.

b. Participates in the development and revision (if needed) of the Beginning Teacher's Professional Development Plan.

c. Provides resource and support services to the new teacher.

d. Makes periodic formal and informal observations of the Beginning Teacher's classroom for the purpose of diagnosing strengths and weaknesses and providing feedback and assistance to the Beginning Teacher based on the diagnosis.

e. Provides information for the formative stages of the evaluation process.

f. Participates in training sessions devoted to the state's Performance Appraisal System.

Figure 3. (cont.)

beginning teacher, she identified numerous other positive consequences for the program. The one stressed most was the effect of participation on the peer teachers in terms of enhanced professional status and growth in knowledge from participation in the training and enactment of the program. She commented also that administrators had benefitted from the program through improved observational skills. Finally, she expressed the view that the students in the classrooms were also the benefactors of the program in terms of enhancing learning outcomes. No weaknesses or negative consequences were identified, although some "problems" with the paperwork burden and getting started early enough in the year to help the beginning teacher were noted. The director's view of the program is best summarized in her statement: "I don't know of any one thing that has had a positive effect throughout the state as this program."

District B

There are many similarities between School District B and School District A in terms of both the setting and the induction program itself. School District A is located in the central portion of the state. Like District A, the students in this district are drawn from a fairly broad representation of ethnic backgrounds and family income levels. The district is highly regarded within the state for the quality of its educational program. The year of the RITE study was the second year for the induction program in this district also. The individual responsible for directing the program in the district had served in this role since the program's inception. Directing the beginning teacher program was her sole responsibility in the district. She described herself in our first interview as the program coordinator responsible for implementing the beginning teacher program in the district.

The director described the overall purpose of the program as one of supporting teachers during their first year of teaching. She discussed the purpose of the program also in terms of an intended effect on pupil learning: "...we want the students in a beginning teacher's classroom to be able to achieve as well as students in a more experienced teacher's classroom." In our initial interview, the director described the intensive training she had received from the state in preparation for the program. She confided that the program was running much more smoothly this year than it had the previous one. She attributed this to the learning that had taken place during the start-up year.

In the second interview (mid-year), the director stated that the program was running according to plan. There were 199 beginning teachers enrolled in the program. At the time of this interview she had knowledge of only five beginning teachers who were having any serious problems in their teaching assignments.

The findings from our second interview which related to the features of the induction program in the district are presented in Figure 4. As described in the previous sections, a list of responsibilities was developed from a review of published documents describing the program. Through the interview process the program director verified these responsibilities. During the interview the director added one optional responsibility (d) to the beginning teacher's list relating to the freedom to add information to the portfolio. The director also noted that responsibility "e" of the "building level administrator" and (b) of the "other professional educator" regarding ongoing instruction and counseling were "recommended" and not required. This kind of involvement, she noted, is the primary

State #2, District B Level Checklist

1. Beginning Teacher

   a. Helps schedule and participates in classroom observation and assessment procedures.

   b. Participates in the formation of his/her individual plan of development and is responsible for its implementation.

   c. Participates in group and individualized staff development activities.

   d.* Add to portfolio any items that they want to put in.

2. Peer Teacher

   a. Participates in supervisory team training activities.

   b. Provides ongoing instruction and counseling to the beginning teacher.

   c. Participates in the formulation of the beginning teachers' individual plan of development.

   d. Makes a minimum of one formal formative observation in the beginning teachers' classroom to be preceded and followed by conferences. A written report follows.

3. Building Level Administrator

   a. Organizes and selects members of the Beginning Teacher support team.

   b. Serves as a leader for the support staff team.

   c. Participates in supervisory team training activities.

   d. Coordinates a school-level orientation meeting with support staff and beginning teacher.

   e.* Provides ongoing instruction and counseling to the beginning teacher.

   f. Participates in the formulation of each beginning teacher's individual plan of development.

   g. Holds major responsibility for evaluations of beginning teacher and makes formal observations (2) associated with the summative evaluation process.

*optional
Figure 4.

h. Makes a minimum of one formative observation in each beginning teacher's classroom to be preceded and followed by conferences. A written report follows.

i. Verifies to the Superintendent that the beginning teacher has satisfactorily demonstrated teaching competencies based on the state's Essential Teacher Competencies specified in State Board Rule 6A-5.62(2)(j) plus the additional Exceptional Education Identification Competency and is eligible to receive a state Regular Teaching Certificate.

4. Other Professional Educator

a. Participates in supervisory team training activities.

b.* Provides ongoing instruction and counseling to the beginning teacher.

c. Participates in the formulation of the beginning teacher's individual plan of development.

d. Makes a minimum of one formal observation in the beginning teacher's classroom to be followed by a formative conference.

e. Recommends resource and support services to the beginning teacher and to other members of the support staff, which may include a) coordinating materials and activities for implementing the individual plan of development and b) scheduling inservice activities and/or university assistance, if needed.

Figure 4. (cont.)

responsibility of the peer teacher. She also stressed the difference between "observation" and "evaluation" in the responsibilities of the team members. The peer teacher and the other educator are required to observe but not to evaluate. That is, they served as "data collectors" but make no judgments per se. Making judgments in the true sense of evaluation is the responsibility of the building level administrator (usually the principal).

In the final interview, the program director described the strengths of the program in terms of: (1) the assistance afforded to the beginning teacher; (2) the fact that there is more than one person making decisions on certification; (3) the challenge for continuing growth that it (the program) offers to the strong beginning teacher; and (4) the way in which the processes included in the program develop a spirit of "self-assessment" which is basic to continued professional development. The last point was taken to apply not only to the beginning teacher but also to the other members of the support team.

The program director described the weaknesses of the program as twofold: (1) the amount of documentation required by law that often gets in the way of doing the job well; and (2) some questioning of the research base on effective teaching that underpins the observation system in use. The concern over the last point was with respect to certain areas of the 24 essential competencies for which there is no research base. When asked to describe any adjustments that were being made in the state program in response to local circumstances, the program director confided that in their program they require only the minimum number of observations set forth in the state guidelines. She was aware of programs in other counties where the local guidelines required more than the minimum. Her intent here was to

encourage decision-making on the part of individual teams based on what is needed and not what is mandated.

In summary, the director was very positive about the beginning teacher program in her district. Her comments indicate that the program was being implemented without great difficulty and in accordance with state guidelines.

Discussion

Our findings confirm implementation of the state mandates for beginning teacher programs with high "fidelity" (Loucks, 1983) in the four districts surveyed. Each of the district-level administrators appeared well-informed and articulate in discussing the state mandates and the organization of their respective programs. All of the directors were positive about their programs and indicated that this positive view was shared by most educators in their districts. The directors expressed greatest satisfaction with the assistance and support being provided to the first-year teachers through the induction programs. Most of the directors expressed the view at one point or another that the degree of success in this "assistance" function was tied to the effectiveness of the individual first-year teacher's "support" team.

While satisfaction was expressed in most cases with the "mechanics" of assessment...there was some concern over whether the program was effective in "screening" the profession. The fact that all of the teachers included in our sample and practically all of the first-year teachers in the four districts were recommended for certification suggests several possible alternative explanations: these districts have a remarkably talented group of first-year teachers; the support provisions in the program are highly effective; and/or the screening function of the programs is not working

well. If the latter is true, then serious questions arise as to whether the "intent" of reforms directed at first-year teachers is being met as policy is enacted at the district level even under the optimum conditions explored in this study.

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